

# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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*Activity Title:*

## Construct a Multi-Modal Transportation Center

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*Activity Purpose and Overview:*

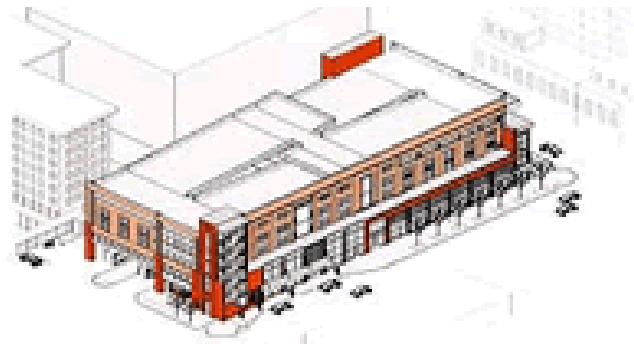
This recommended MMT activity calls for the construction of a multi-modal transportation center to enhance transit use, bicycle use, and pedestrian activity. Funding will be pursued, preferably in the form of a Congressional earmark, to construct the center and add it as a significant aspect of the local and regional transportation system. This effort will be related to other multi-modal efforts such as the immediate and long term adjustments to StarTran's operational approach and service provisions.

A multi-modal transportation center will provide a high level amenity for local StarTran transit users, bicyclists who desire to use transit when they travel, pedestrians as an information center and travel hub, and other transportation providers. Such an amenity would also provide a strong and permanent statement of intent on the part of Lincoln to become a multi-modal friendly community. The implementation of such a facility will provide more efficient bus service, and will provide opportunities for revitalization and increased business activity in the area the transportation center is located. It is possible that such a transportation facility may be built as a multi-use center including office, commercial, and even residential uses, along with parking services.

In advance of the center's development, a formal analysis will be completed to determine the appropriate location of a multi-modal transportation center. This analysis will include carrying out a public review process to obtain community reaction to the concept, and to identify opportunities for multiple uses on the site and possible partners in the project. One key component of this analysis will be to use site considerations gathered during the Downtown Master Plan process as part of the necessary background information. Also, identifying funding sources to assist in the construction of such a facility will be imperative to the viability of this project.

## *Activity Description:*

A multi-modal transportation center is a physical structure that provides services for a range of transportation modes. As part of this range of services, a transportation center functions as a major transfer point for bus transit operations where multiple bus routes converge allowing transfers between lines. Such a hub for transit operations is combined with provisions for bicycle parking and storage, pedestrian information and services, and even potential future rail service, if sited appropriately, to serve as a multi-modal transportation center. A covered drop-off and pick-up area is provided as an amenity for users of the facility, as are provisions for fare purchase, heated waiting areas, information services, restrooms, and even concessions in a central location inside the building.



**Renderings of Sioux City  
Multi-Modal Transportation Center**



In addition, it is possible to include provisions for automobile parking for both park-and-ride users of the transit, bike, or pedestrian system, and for regular parking services in the form of a parking garage above or below the transportation center. Often revenue from parking services helps pay for operational costs of the facility.



**Patron Waiting Area Inside Sioux City  
Multi-Modal Transportation Center**

The potential exists to include retail and office space on the ground level of the facility in order to make the site not only multi-modal in nature, but also multi-use. Even residential uses are possible above the parking facilities, or as the major use of the site above the transportation center. Leasing of office, retail, and residential space also helps fund the operation of the facility.

The cost to construct a multi-modal center varies between \$4 million and \$12 million, depending on the size and complexity of the project. There are various regional examples of such facilities that have a range in cost.

### **Topeka, Kansas**

In Topeka, Kansas, an effort was undertaken to upgrade the existing transit station by constructing covered and heated waiting areas, providing improved route and schedule information, and creating a single location for bus transfers which reduced the need for patrons to cross major streets for transit service. A Congressional earmark of \$3 million from the Federal Transit Administration was obtained for the project, and a \$750,000 local match was provided.

### **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

In Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, a transfer center that includes an air conditioned waiting area, covered loading and unloading areas for transit users, detailed route and schedule information, and vending machines is being constructed. A Congressional earmark of \$3.1 million from the Federal Transit Administration was obtained for the project, and a \$775,000 local match was provided.

### **Metro Area Transit, Omaha, Nebraska**

Metro Area Transit (MAT) in Omaha is constructing two major transfer centers in an attempt to provide added services and amenities for its users. A North Omaha transit center is being constructed to include benches, signage, and video surveillance. This project involves a partnership with Metro Community College and a City library that makes the site multi-use and more user friendly. A Congressional earmark of \$1.6 million from FTA, and a local match of \$400,000 is being used to fund this project.

Also in Omaha, MAT is participating in a redevelopment project at the South Omaha stockyards location in partnership again with Metro Community College and a local daycare facility. A transfer center with improved passenger amenities and video surveillance will be constructed as part of a planned multi-use development. A Congressional earmark of \$1.5 million from FTA was secured for this project, along with a \$375,000 local match.

### **Sioux City, Iowa**

Recently Sioux City, Iowa constructed the most multi-modal and multi-use transportation facility in the region. Using a \$9.28 million Congressional earmark from FTA, and matching that with \$2.32 million in local funds, Sioux City has constructed a multi-modal transportation center that includes local city bus transit services, Jefferson Lines regional bus service, and Greyhound bus service. The facility also provides connections to the city's skywalk system, and it contains a five level parking garage above the bus transfer center which provides 478 parking spaces. Bike racks are provided at the facility, and space has been reserved for the possible



**Ticketing Service Window Inside Sioux City  
Multi-Modal Transportation Center**

provision of bike lockers in the future. Also included in the facility are ticket purchase windows, an air conditioned and heated indoor waiting area, a covered drop-off and pick-up lane, restrooms, an electronic information kiosk for patrons, and office space for bus service providers. Direct connections to the newly renovated historic Orpheum Theater and the adjacent office building are provided. Approximately 8,300 square feet of retail and office space is provided on the street level of the facility for lease as well.

Sale of the existing downtown bus transfer center will help fund the local costs of the project, and revenues from the Jefferson Lines and Greyhound leases in the facility, and from the parking fee revenue, help cover the operating costs of the facility. The process to obtain funding and finally get the facility built began in 1995 and ended in 2003. Multiple sources of funding, including local, state, and private funds, were used to come up with the necessary local match.

### **Need for Technical Study**

As part of any effort to build such a facility, a technical study will be conducted to begin the process and establish the foundation for the effort to construct the facility. The scope of the technical study conducted for the Sioux City project included the following major tasks:

- Define the functions and roles of a transfer facility.
- Determine the demand for transportation and non-transportation activities and the space required to serve the demand.
- Evaluate alternatives and recommend the optimal site.
- Prepare illustrative plans to indicate how the site might accommodate the project demanded.
- Estimate the capital cost required and identify sources of funds.

A study similar to this is needed in Lincoln in order to obtain the necessary data and background to effectively plan, site, and construct such a facility. Such a study will also be needed to assist in obtaining a Congressional earmark for project funding purposes.

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### *Activity Time Line and Responsibility:*

A multi-modal transportation center should be constructed within five (5) years of the issuance of the Multi-Modal Transportation Study final report. As part of this construction effort, a technical study will be completed to effectively plan, site, and gain funding for the construction of this facility. This project should be appropriately coordinated with and related to the Downtown Master Plan effort, changes in the delivery of StarTran Services, any route analysis of the StarTran system, and any changes to the management and financing of public transportation services in Lincoln.

The technical study should involve the StarTran Advisory Board, StarTran administrators, transit users, bus operators, and representatives from the community at-large. The study should also involve staff from StarTran, Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department, Lincoln Mayor's Office, County Administration, City Finance Department, the City and County's Legislative Lobbyists, and the City-County Planning Department.

The responsibility for completing the study, and ultimately constructing the facility, should be assigned to a single entity as determined by the Mayor's Office. The study should be undertaken using existing staff with outside assistance utilized for specialized assistance as appropriate.

Should the study recommend moving forward with the development of a multi-modal transportation center, the construction of such a facility may take several years to complete. With commencement of the project, a concerted effort to obtain a Congressional earmark to help fund the project will be necessary to ensure the viability of the facility. It is assumed that action on the recommendations of the study would occur within five years of the issuance of the Multi-Modal Transportation Study final report.

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### *Activity Resource Needs:*

The Downtown Master Plan study offers the opportunity to look at possible sites for a multi-modal center if it is located in the Downtown. This information will be useful as background information for the technical study that is needed prior to the construction of the multi-modal center.

Existing city staff will need to manage and conduct the technical review that will identify the demand, need, and site suitability for the multi-modal transportation center. Should the managers of this review of information determine additional outside specialized assistance is necessary and/or desirable, applicable budget funds will need to be identified. It may be useful and cost effective to combine this technical study with an analysis that looks at the long term array of possible transit service delivery options. An outside consultant would be used for such a comprehensive effort. Such a combination of studies would make sense as the location and even the basic need for a major transit transfer location will be influenced greatly by the form of transit service being provided.

The construction of the multi-modal transportation center will cost between \$4 million and \$12 million dollars depending on the size of the project. A Congressional earmark for funding will be needed to make the project financially feasible. Local funding will be needed to cover the 20% local match for the earmark. This local cost will be between \$800,000 and \$2.4 million.

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